

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKLOAD RELATED TO HOUSEHOLD AND FARM ACTIVITIES – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Gender differences are very common in the rural areas, mainly in the developing countries like India. Women are always disadvantaged, due to the lack of education, limited access to resources and patriarchal norms put by the society. Though women give their work contribution at household and farm level, their role remains unrecognized. This creates a hindrance for their development. This paper tried to analyse the roles of men and women in household and farm activities. The review showed that, women had a greater workload compared to men, as they were involved in both farm and household activities. Educational Policies have to be framed to reduce these inequalities between the genders.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Differences, Workload, Household & Farm

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INTRODUCTION

Households in all societies differentiate various household activities and responsibilities by gender. Men often serve as managers in many cultures. The major challenge women face is the necessity to balance the family and occupation. For women, production and reproduction are two interlinked activities, and much of the work women do, although productive, is unpaid. Men have always played a minor role in domestic work; societies tending to assume that they have paid work outside the home. Therefore, proper measures have to be taken to remove the gender differences which can help in reducing the work stress on women and increase their development and family welfare.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

- To study the gender roles in the farm families.
- To analyse the gender differences existing in the farm families related to household and farm activities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Suman (2002) stated that, majority of women participated in marketing of milk, both in actual doing and supervision. This activity was followed by health care of animals. Actual participation was more in case of preparing of feed, feeding, giving water and health care of animals.

Rani et al. (2002) concluded that, weeding and harvesting activities were performed independently by women in most of the cases, whereas joint participation with men was found in case of sowing, nursery, raising, transplanting and irrigation management etc.

Kumari and Arya (2002) portrayed that, in the livestock management, male participation was maximum in harvesting fodder, bringing fodder, feeding, offering water, healthcare, heat detecting and natural services whereas women's participation was maximum in cleaning of shed and preparation of food for livestock.

Sadaf and Siegmann (2004) had done an exploratory analysis of the resulting workload for women and men in Pakistan. The results showed that, women had a significantly longer working week than their male household members. Apart from this, a gender division of labour became superficial with women working at home rather than outside and this reflected some gender norms. This indicated that access to gainful work is severely restricted for women in rural areas.

Nath et al. (2005) studied on the role of farm women in livestock management in rice, in Balasore district of Odisha, India. The study revealed that majority of small and marginal farmers of the district were rearing goats when compared to cows and poultry birds. Farm women were performing their role better in providing feed and water to animals than any other activities. The lowest involvement of farm women in livestock management was in liasoning with the veterinary staff, for treatment with a participation index of only 13.8 per cent.

Arora (2006) found that in agriculture related activities, both men and women were occupied in majority of the activities, whereas in the case of animal husbandry activities female participation was more.

Luqman et al. (2006) explored on the extent of rural women's participation, in agricultural and household activities in Pakistan and concluded that women's participation was very much high in picking of cotton among farming activities but were occasionally involved in seed preparation and not at all involved in selling of agricultural commodities. Among livestock activities, their participation was highest in cleaning of animal sheds. They occasionally also participated in watering of animals and not at all participated in egg collection of poultry birds. Looking after the family members was their premier task in their household activities and were also occasionally involved in knitting and not at all participated in doing other handicraft works.

Nyukuri (2006) deliberated on gender division of labour and revealed that a clear division of labour existed with regard to farming activities performed by men and women in Kenya. Men were involved in land clearing, land preparation and planting cash crops and were generally allocated more hours to farming activities than women did. Women were more involved in activities such as planting food crops, watering the crops, storage and food processing and were also responsible for a large number of productive activities performed in and around the house, in addition to the productive community management activities. As a result, women performed more tasks, had greater responsibilities and worked longer hours than men.

Lu (2007) piloted a study on gender differentiation in farm families regarding food preparation and cooking activities in Benguet, Philippines. The results showed that these tasks were performed predominantly by the wife followed by the husband. As for the children, daughters were more involved in the task, when compared to sons. This showed the continued perpetuation of family roles traditionally attributed to women.

Sikka (2007) in a study on rural women and buffalo rearing found that, all activities like cleaning of sheds, dung disposal and animal care at the time of calving were carried out solely by women. Whereas activities like watering animals, milking, bathing, feeding were dominated by women and shared by their counterparts at a smaller level. Milking animals and cleaning of sheds were the most time taking jobs for women. Women farmers performed quite hardy jobs like raring but their access to decision making remained limited.

Taj (2007) studied on gender dimensions of labour participation, in vegetable farming system in the Attock district of Punjab, Pakistan. It was found that in commercial vegetable production, mostly family male and hired male labour was involved. Women had a reasonable (more than 40 %) involvement especially in hoeing, weeding and picking of the vegetables. Further marketing of vegetables output was also male dominated as more than 90 per cent of male involved in marketing of these commodities while women have more involvement in milk, ghee and poultry sale. As women had low participation in commercial vegetable production in this district, household based women activities may be generated to utilize optimum potential of women in the area.

Uzokwe (2009) examined the gender roles in agricultural production and suggested the use of the information for policy advocacy and strengthening of agricultural service delivery in the Seychelles. The study revealed that, there were no gender specific roles or stereotypes. Men were more involved in all the food production activities except for food processing. Other areas where high level of women's participation was seen were marketing, maintaining farm hygiene, record keeping and purchasing of inputs. Low level female participation was a result of attitudinal change, difficult agricultural land terrain, unfavourable government policies and un-holistic approach of agricultural extension services which focused only on the male farmer instead of the entire farm family.

Rani and Tandon (2011) studied on the role and responsibility profile of gender in farming from ten villages of Ambala and Kurukshetra districts of Haryana state, India. In livestock management activities, most of the rural women had independent participation in cattle shed management, excreta management and processing of produce. Men were having more participation in care of sick animals, breeding of animals and management of cash. Most of the men did not have any responsibility in almost all the operations, except where money is involved.

Singh et al. (2012) studied on the climate change and role of women in agriculture: a case study of Meghalaya, India. Extreme climate variability affects both men and women but with different consequences according to their roles and responsibilities. Both male and female counterparts of the household contributed to farming activities and livelihood. The role of wives increased in decision making on selling of livestock during stress period. During the drought period, the increase in workload to collect firewood and drinking water were borne by women. There was a significant difference in responses between the male and female farmers on the issues of food and water availability and on health and agricultural activities as these were the issues where women played important roles, and men denied to totally accepting it. The results highlighted that women should be encouraged to take up different micro enterprises both in on and off-farm production and in processing to generate alternative employment opportunities leading to higher level of income.

Siwach et al. (2011) studied on participation of rural women in household food security. The study was conducted in randomly selected villages of district Rohtak and Panipat from purposively selected state Haryana, India. The study revealed that the rural women participated in almost all the identified works. First priority of women with respect to participation in both states was childcare, but second and third priorities were field operations, cleaning and cooking in Rohtak district, whereas cleaning and cooking, storage and processing were ranked second and third respectively, in case of Panipat. The last area of participation of rural women was marketing, buying of goods, buying of property and searching brides/bridegrooms for their children.

Varsha and Kunwar (2011) studied on the participation of women in agriculture and dairy activities through PRA techniques in Kanpur district, India. In some of the farm activities like sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, winnowing, storing etc. and dairy activities like fodder collection and milking etc. the participation of women was higher

than men and working hours were often considerably longer than that of men. Women's role in agricultural operations, animal husbandry and other economically productive activities was very significant. They contributed about 60-70% of the labour required for these activities thus playing a pivotal role in sustaining economy. Depending upon economic status, women performed the tasks of collecting fodder, collecting and processing dung.

Campos et al. (2012) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) conducted a study on gender inequalities in the rural employment in Ghana. The resulted presented that women spend almost the same amount of time as men in the productive activities and women were substantially more involved than their male counterparts in domestic activities. There were only subtle differences between men and women in the allocation of time for productive activities, although more men work full time than women. However, there was a wide gender gap in the time allocated to domestic activities and the magnitude of the gender gap showed the urgency of adopting measures for reducing the female time-burden of domestic and care work to enable them to engage in more productive activities.

Kumari (2012) evaluated the role of women in livestock farming. The results showed that women were engaged in different animal tasks from dawn to dusk such as caring of animals, watering and feeding, cleaning of animal shed, disposal of dung, milking and processing of milk to make ghee, curd and lassi. It was clear that under mixed farming system; most of the activities related to dairy animals were taken care of by women of the family. Hence, the technical knowledge of rural women in livestock production needs to be enhanced through imparting special trainings.

Singh and Srivastava (2012) studied on gender differentials in performance of farm and non-farm activities. The present study was conducted in Ummednagar village of tehsil Mandor of Jodhpur district, Rajasthan, India. The observations were taken regarding activities related to agricultural production, livestock, and domestic works. In case of agricultural activities it was observed that there was a clear-cut differentiation among some works performed by male and female members individually whereas, overlapping was seen in few activities which they performed jointly. Women never were involved in marketing the produce. In case of livestock activities, women always involved in all the other activities like fodder collection, drying, feeding, cleaning, milking, processing milk etc, except in health care. Regarding the different household works, the contribution of women was very high, except in buying the household provisions which was primarily done by the male members or jointly.

Singh and Tewari (2012) studied on intra-zonal differences in roles among gender in farming activities, Uttarakhand, India. Data was collected from 2100 respondents of Tarai and Bhabhar zone and Hill zone of Uttarakhand state. Intra-zonal differences in farming activities revealed that, in Tarai and Bhabhar zone, independent roles and complete responsibilities of men dominated in crop production and post-harvest management activities; whereas in the Hill zone women had independent roles and complete responsibilities.

Sidhu and Sharma (2013) studied on the gender differences in agriculture of India and found that women were involved in farming activities along with men, particularly in harvesting, weeding, transplanting, nursery raising and land preparation. The comparative data showed that more women were responsible for farming activities than those participating physically. Women and men were both found to focus their role and responsibility leading towards a need to focus on generating data through participatory approach for more definite results.

Sekar (2014) conducted a case study in Tamil Nadu, India, to study the women's role in farm related works. The results showed that the maintenance and sale of livestock are highly dominated by women. Women carried out harvesting

and most of the post production operations like collection, cleaning, grading, sorting, packaging, handling etc. but men largely control them.

CONCLUSIONS

From the review of literature done on this topic it can be clearly seen that there were a lot of differences seen in the farm families related to the workload distributed, both at the household and occupational level. Women had a greater workload compared to men, as they were involved in both household and agricultural works. Women contributed their time and effort in both agricultural and household activities, but men were mostly contributed their effort and involved in agricultural activities. In some cases, it was also observed that the gender defined and definite roles which were been practising from since ages have been the major cause for these differences in the workload. But in the recent times, a good sign is seen in some areas all over the world, as there is a reduction of the gender differences due to the favourable women empowerment policies put forth. Women are also becoming self-sufficient in managing and doing the same works done by men, mainly the farm women, both at the household and occupational level. If this continues, both men and women can walk hand-in-hand equally and the concept of 'Gender Equality' can be achieved.

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